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Sent: Tuesday, May 30, 2006 1:17 PM  
To: jugoretz@dfg.ca.gov  
Cc: Mary Delaney; fgc@fgc.ca.gov; Melissa Miller-Henson; canestro@lifesci.ucsb.edu; leboeuf@ucsc.edu  
Subject: Marine Reserve at Año Nuevo

May 30, 2006

John Ugoretz  
Nearshore Ecosystem / MLPA Coordinator  
California Department of Fish and Game  
20 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Suite 100  
Monterey, CA 93940

Dear Mr. Ugoretz,

I write to urge you to support the establishment of a Marine Reserve offshore of Año Nuevo Island. A marine reserve would be an important step in conserving the unique marine habitat that exists here. Año Nuevo Island and the adjacent mainland point is an unusually rich and unique natural history area along the west coast of the United States for both research and education. The pinniped population consisting of four species that breed there (elephant seals, harbor seals, California sea lions and Steller sea lions) have been subjected to continuous scientific study since the early 1960s. More scientific papers have been published from studies conducted here than for any other site in the western hemisphere. This wealth of information has served the Department of Parks and Recreation well in interpreting this resource to thousands of tourists which visit the area annually, many of whom are school children. Scores of academic theses (MA and PhD) have been written based on data collected at this site. The topics have covered intertidal organisms, marine plants, birds and marine mammals. The docent program for elephant seal tourists run by Department of Parks and Recreation serves as a model for other areas, e.g., Piedras Blancas. In part because of the concentrated pinniped and marine bird life, the marine plant life in the surrounding waters receives added enrichment, has a long growing season, and is unusually healthy. The pinnipeds attract white sharks that appear in the area reliably every October and remain there until winter. Fish and shellfish life I suspect, would also flourish if there was sufficient protection from fishing and collecting. A marine reserve offshore of Año Nuevo would be a first step in protecting this invaluable resource.

I urge you to support making this happen.

Respectfully,

Bernard J. Le Boeuf  
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and  
Research Professor of Biology

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